

FIELD MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY

28 December 1988

TO: Dr. W. Ross Silcock
Box 300
Tabor, Iowa 51653

FROM: Peter Lowther
Field Museum of Natural History
Roosevelt Road at Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Re: Probable sighting of House Finch at Burlington, IA

During Christmas visiting at Burlington, I operated some nets around feeders at my mother's. On 25 December, I saw what I called a male Purple Finch at a feeder with sunflower seeds. I later caught a brown and white striped Carpodacus. Since I had limited holding facilities at the time (one bag and hands), and no size 1 bands, I just followed through Banding Laboratory keys and then released the bird. It keyed out as a House Finch:

wing chord = 73 mm [not Cassin's Finch]

culmen curved = yes

tail nearly square = yes

no white eye line or malar streak (brown birds) = yes

tried to bite = no

House Finch meets these (Purple Finch does not).

I have in the past handled Purple Finches and recently lived in Idaho (1985-1987) although most of my casual observations of both species have assumed that brown and white striped Carpodacus were what they were supposed to be. The above records all of the notes I took at the time. I am convinced the bird was a House Finch from this, field guide illustrations and from collection material at Field Museum. Your judgement is appreciated.

Very truly yours,



Peter Lowther